

Dear Members of the Higher Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Dayane Torres from Stamford, and I am a student at the University of Connecticut. I am a member of the organization CT Students for a Dream. I stand in support of SB 147: AN ACT ASSISTING STUDENTS WITHOUT LEGAL IMMIGRATION STATUS WITH THE COST OF COLLEGE. This bill would equalize access to institutional financial aid at Connecticut public universities and colleges to all students regardless of immigration status.

I am from Bogota, Colombia and I have been in the United States for 17 years. My parents and I came to the U.S. when I was one year old. I grew up in Stamford my whole life. Even though I grew up here, there is still something that holds me back. Because of my Deferred Action status, I am unable to receive Federal and Institutional Aid.

I am currently a freshman at the University of Connecticut in Storrs studying Physiology and neurobiology. Education is important to me because I want to be able to have the opportunity to expand my horizons. Education is a form of empowerment and I firmly believe everyone should have access to higher education.

Due to my status, I have faced many financial barriers. Money is a big issue for my family and I in which has caused both of us, a lot of stress. I have a lot of weight on my shoulders and it is a heavy weight that I carry with me. Due to not being able to qualify for any type of Federal and Institutional Aid, I am not sure if I will be able to attend the University next semester.

Having access to Institutional Aid would take this big weight off of both me and my parent's shoulders. If the bill SB147 passes, I would see myself getting closer to my dream of receiving a degree. I would not have to worry so much about finding the funds for school in which many prohibit me to qualify for due to my status.

Legislators support SB 147 because it ensures a better future for undocumented students. If the education years from k-12 is accessible, then higher education should also be accessible.

I support SB 147 and hope the committee will vote favorably on SB 147.

Thank you for your time,

Dayane Torres, Stamford